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COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

June 26, 1980

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Dear Colleague:

Last winter many of you or your staffs met with several young refugees and Catholic priests from the former Portugese colony of East Timor, who came to Washington to discuss some of the problems facing their beleaguered country.

A prime concern of the East Timorese we met with is family reunification. Since late 1976, few people have been allowed to leave East Timor without paying enormous illegal bribes to Indonesian officials. Needless to say, most East Timorese are in no position to do this. The refugees with whom we met all have close relatives who have been prevented from leaving East Timor to join them in Portugal.

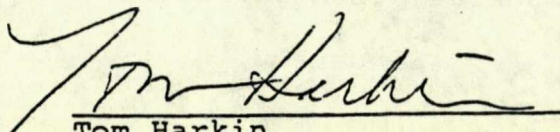
Furthermore, since their visit to Washington, the refugees have received no communications from their families remaining in East Timor. The identities of the young Timorese refugees who were in Washington are known to the Indonesian authorities; and the refugees fear that their families may be suffering reprisals or harassment.

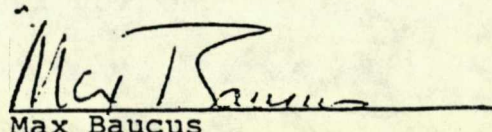
Because of our concern for these particular individuals and the family reunification question in general, we are sending the enclosed letter to the Indonesian Ambassador in Washington.

If you would like to demonstrate your concern by joining us, please contact Holly Burkhalter with Rep. Harkin at 5-3806 as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Tom Harkin
Member of Congress


Max Baucus
Senator

TOM HARKIN
5TH DISTRICT, IOWA

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His Excellency D. Ashari
Ambassador
Embassy of Indonesia
2020 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ambassador Ashari:

We would like to express our concern over the situation of East Timorese who wish to be reunited with their families in Portugal and Australia, as well as others who wish to leave East Timor. We are particularly concerned about the families of individuals with whom we are personally acquainted. A list of names and addresses of their families is attached; all have voiced their desire to join their relatives in Portugal.

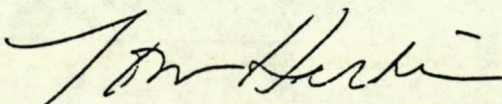
We recognize that the Government of Indonesia is aware of these humanitarian problems and would like to see a just solution no less than we do. Nonetheless, we understand that problems on the local level have resulted in extremely long delays.

It has been made known to us that if the Government of Indonesia will allow these people to leave, the Government of Portugal would welcome them, and that members of their families or humanitarian agencies would assist with transportation costs.

We hope that you can lend your assistance in facilitating the reunification of families in Portugal and Australia and, importantly, the speedy departure for Portugal of those individuals and families named here. These are family members of East Timorese refugees who visited with members of Congress and officials in the Executive branch last February.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

Sincerely,


Tom Harkin
Member of Congress


Max Baucus
Senator

TONY P. HALL
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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COMMITTEE
SMALL BUSINESS
SUBCOMMITTEE SBA AND SBC AUTHORITY
AND GENERAL SMALL BUSINESS PROBLEMS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ANTITRUST RESTRAINT
OF TRADE ACTIVITIES AFFECTING
SMALL BUSINESS
FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIAN AND
PACIFIC AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

FACTS ON SEC. 406 -- "REPORT ON EAST TIMOR"

- * This section was approved unanimously by the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs and complements the findings of the Wolff Congressional Delegation trip.
- * Sec. 406 simply requests the Administration to report to Congress on the actions it has taken to encourage the Indonesian Government to allow increased access to East Timor by international relief organizations and to permit them to establish relief operations directly on East Timor. It also seeks to encourage the Indonesians to allow free emigration from East Timor, particularly in the case of families whose members already have left while others remain behind. Finally, it encourages the Indonesians to allow access to East Timor by international journalists.
- * The section seeks to elicit information -- not make accusations. There have been numerous allegations raised both before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs and in the media about problems with the relief effort in East Timor. The purpose of this sense of Congress resolution and the report requirement is to get more of the facts about what is occurring in East Timor and what the United States should be doing. Conflicting reports about East Timor should be resolved.

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REPORT ON EAST TIMOR

Asia
Subcommittee

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SEC. 406. (a) It is the sense of the Congress that the

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President should take all appropriate measures to--

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(1) encourage the Government of Indonesia to

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allow increased access to East Timor by international

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relief agencies and to allow the establishment in East

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Timor of humanitarian relief operations by such inter-

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national agencies;

- * (From the testimony of Prof. Ben Anderson of Cornell before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Subcommittee on International Organizations):
"International relief supplies have also been manipulated and embezzled by the local Indonesian military. In some cases, the distribution of relief has been made contingent on 'loyalty,' and even on the performance of intelligence functions for the army. In other cases, clothing, medicine, and other vital commodities have ended up, not with the refugees, but on the local black market.
"It is important to emphasize that even now the ICRC, barred from East Timor from the time of the December 1975 invasion through the spring of 1979, has still been permitted only three foreign personnel -- one doctor, one nurse, and one administrator -- though it is supposed to deliver effectively almost \$2,000,000 in aid to tens of thousands of East Timorese. It has to work through the Indonesian Red Cross, whose officials, even when dedicated, are subject to severe political controls by the military. Catholic Relief Services, in effect a subcontractor for U.S. AID, has not even been allowed to station one foreigner on a regular basis in East Timor."
- * (From the March 6, 1980 Christian Science Monitor article "U.S. role in plight of Timor: an issue that won't go away"):

"At any rate, at one point last year, more than 200,000 people, or two-fifths of the population of East Timor, were said by experts to be suffering from malnutrition."

- * (From the Jan. 29, 1980 New York Times article "Refugees From East Timor Report Famine Situation"):

"Ranking Indonesian officers have organized a system, using soldiers as middlemen, to divert Indonesian, Red Cross and other humanitarian relief, chiefly rice, to shops in Dili."

- * (From the Jan. 15, 1980 Christian Science Monitor article "Is Timor Aid Being Stolen?"):

"According to Timorese refugees just arriving here (in Portugal), the Indonesian authorities are embezzling part of the international aid currently being channeled to starvation-struck East Timor."

15 (2) encourage the Government of Indonesia to
16 allow free emigration from East Timor, particularly in
17 the case of families some members of which have previ-
18 ously left East Timor; and

- * (From the March 6, 1980 Christian Science Monitor article "U.S. role in plight of Timor: an issue that won't go away"):

"The Indonesian government claims to have created no obstacles to the departure of Timorese who want to join family members living in Australia and Portugal. But Australian and Portuguese diplomats contend that the Indonesians are reluctant to let many Timorese leave the island for fear that they might publicize what has happened there."

- * (From the testimony of Prof. Ben Anderson of Cornell before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Subcommittee on International Organizations):

"Inhabitants of East Timor have been forcibly prevented from leaving. Virtually no native Timorese have been allowed to escape; the same is largely true of Portuguese citizens. Only a small cluster of Chinese have managed to get out, at the cost of paying what, in the East Timor context, are enormous bribes to Indonesian officials."

19 (3) encourage the Government of Indonesia to
20 allow access to East Timor by international journal-
21 ists.

- * (From the Jan. 29, 1980 New York Times article "Refugees From East Timor Report Famine Situation"):

"When important outsiders, particularly foreign journalists, visited Dili, the refugees said, the Indonesians removed tanks and other military vehicles from the town, naval vessels were withdrawn from sight and soldiers and policemen went into the streets in plainclothes, pretending to be Timorese and warning people against talking to the visitors. 'When journalists go there they are never free,' a man recounted, adding, in reference to the Indonesian President: 'And people are forced to shout "Viva Suharto!" There are many police in mufti watching, and if people say anything else, they are dealt with later.'"

- * (From the testimony of Prof. Ben Anderson of Cornell before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs and the Subcommittee on International Organizations):

"Since the Indonesian occupation began, foreign correspondents have been systematically excluded from East Timor; on the rare occasions when some have been let in they have been prevented from making free contacts with the population. The only American correspondent of note to have visited East Timor recently, Mr. Henry Kamm of the New York Times, notes that for two whole years his requests for permission to visit were denied. . . ."

- * (From the March 6, 1980 Christian Science Monitor article "U.S. role in plight of Timor: an issue that won't go away"):

"Access to East Timor by the news media remains limited."

22 (b) The President is requested to report to the Congress,
23 not more than six months after the date of the enactment of
24 this Act, with respect to the actions taken to carry out subsec-
25 tion (a) of this section.